H. Percival

THE

College-Examination.

A

POEM.

DUBLIN:

Printed by S. POWELL, for JOHN WATSON, Bookſeller on the *Merchant's-Key*, near the *Old Bridge*, MDCCXXXI.

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TO

Mr. *Kean O Hara*,

OF

Trinity-College.

DEAR COUSIN,

IT hath been obſerv'd, That no Friendſhips are more firm and durable, than thoſe contracted at School in the tender Years: Such is that between You and Me. It was there imprinted on our Minds, like Characters cut in the Bark of a young Tree, that ſpread and increaſe proportionably with the Tree it ſelf; and like a flouriſhing Plant, at School it Budded, in the College it Bloſſom'd, and will (I doubt not) in the

the future Courſe of our Lives, bear Fruit to the Advantage of us both.

I know no One that has ſo juſt a Title to the following Lines as You, ſince they were written as an Amuſement to paſs away thoſe Hours, which (had I ſtill remained in the College) would have been devoted to You, and ſpent in your Company, both with more Pleaſure and more Improvement: I ſhall therefore preſent them to You without any further Apology, and at the ſame time take this Opportunity of declaring, with what an unfeigned Affection

I am,

Dear Couſin,

Your moſt faithful Friend,

And humble Servant,

William Percival.

Dublin, Jan. 14th. 1730.

THE College-Examination.

EXAMINATION's ever-dreaded Toils,
The *Fellow's* Labour, and the *Freſhmen's* Curſe,
Advent'rous I wou'd ſing. Come, heavenly Muſe,
With ſinewy Words and Sentiments divine,
Swell my bold Heart; whilſt I thro' pathleſs Ways,
In all the Freedom of unſhakl'd Verſe,
Muſt daring go, where headſtrong Fancy drives.

Now

NOW fades the Day, and from the Weſtern Sky
Shooting aſlant a leſs refulgent Beam,
The cooler Sun precipitant declines;
With various Paſſions move the *Scholar's* Breaſts,
And anxious for the Morn, inceſſant pant.

CONSCIOUS of ſtudious Pains, with Joy elate
Some wiſh the Dawn, and chide the ling'ring Hours;
Whilſt Others, who, (leſs provident) poſtpon'd
Their painful Task, now with a rapid Courſe
And nimble Eye, ſcour o'er the knotty Page
Of *BURGERSDICIUS:* To their troubled Thoughts
All ſeems Confuſion, ſmall avails their Toil.
'Tis thus the Libertine repents of Crimes,
When Death, with all its grimly Agonies,
Stares in his Face, and criminates the Soul.
Others, who think the Time too far elaps'd,

(Like

(Like the undaunted *Heroe*, who aloft
Dies hardy) ſpurn at Students rummiſh Toil.

THE Night's now ſpent, and *Phebe*'s Silver Light
No more is ſeen; Myriads of twinkling Stars
Quick vaniſh, in a Flood of Brightneſs, loſt.
Now upon every *Scholar's* wakeful Eye,
The Day pours thick----quick ſtarting from their Beds
Nimbly they riſe, and with officious Haſt,
Dreſs, Breakfaſt, Read; thus they prepare to ſtand
Their awful Trial, and receive their Doom.

BUT when at Seven reſounds the warning Peal,
The *Freſhmen* ſhudder at the dire Alarm.
Not more Confuſion ſeiz'd condemn'd *MACHEATH*,
When the deep-ſounding Bell, Death's ſhocking Tongue,
Proclaim'd his Fate impending; when his Face
Diſtorted, as wou'd fright the Pow'rs of Hell,
Grin'd horrible, and terrify'd the Fair.

AGAIN

AGAIN at Eight they hear the boding Sound
Din dreadful in their Ears; from every Dome,
In wild Amaze, confus'd the *Scholars* haſte,
Juſtling along, and with a mingl'd Noiſe,
Croud to the Hall. As when a thouſand Rills
Trickling from Hills around, at once unite,
And down the Vale a roaring Torrent drives.

BEHOLD! the *Senior-Lect'rer* now appears;
Quick all are ſeated; and the ſpacious Hall,
Where many a mingl'd Voice hum'd indiſtinct,
Falls into Silence. Gently down each Form
The ſtern *Roll-gerent* walks, and in his Hand
His faithful Nomenclator dreadful waves.

NOW, one by one, ſome ſolemn *Fellows* come
With Gravity affected; Arm in Arm
Some walk leſs ſerious, chatting up the Hall.

While

While in the midſt the *Senior-Lect'rer* ſtands,
Divides his *Rolls*, and gives to each a Part,
They talk facetious, or at circling Jeſts
Inhuman laugh: Ah little they regard
What ceaſeleſs Panicks throb in *Freſhmen's* Hearts!
Thus Some whom Fortune lifts from low Degree,
Of piteous Woes whilom themſelves ſuſtain'd
Are ſhametully regardleſs. Thus they ſtand,
To every trembling *Scholar's* ſide-long Glance,
A horrible Aſſembly; as of old
To chearleſs *ACHÆMENIDES* appear'd
The one-ey'd Brethren on *Trinacria's* Coaſt.

Lo! *BALDWIN* comes, how dreadfully ſerene!
How grand his Looks! while at his itching Cheek
His nimble Finger, faithful to its truſt,
Inceſſant labours. As he walks along,
The *Scholars* moving thick on either Hand,

Reſpectful

Reſpectful riſe. He paſſes ſtately on,
While awful Majeſty around him ſhines.

NOw on the upper Iſle the *Fellows* ſtand;
With Heads uncover'd, and ſubmiſſive Bow,
They own their Monarch. Hence they all diſperſe,
And down each crowded Form, in Order rang'd,
Begin th' important Buſineſs of the Day.

THRO' LOGICK's crabbed Rules ſome ſteer their Courſe,
Where wonderful Invention nicely ſhows
How Syllogiſtick well-form'd Arguments
Strike Oppoſition dumb. Now Others Thoughts
Thro' PHYSICK's pleaſing Scene delighted roam,
Where into *Nature's* Workings cloſe they pry,
Inquiſitive, and ſearch her ſecret Springs.

NOw in MECHANICKS they with wonder view
Th' inſinuating Wedges uſeful Power,
The Wheel quick turning, or th' encreaſing Force

Of

Of whirling Pulley, or retentive Screw:
And here they ſee (incredible to think!)
How the minuteſt Force, if right apply'd,
Might raiſe the pond'rous Earth —
Thro' MOTION'S wond'rous *Laws* they paſs; and now
Explore the Nature of the LIQUID World.

THIS done, th' aſpiring Mind of vent'rous Man
Contemns this lower Earth, and lofty ſoars
Aërial, where it dwells among the STARS;
Views all the Motions of the Heavenly Orbs;
Diſcerns th' Eclipſes Cauſe; why Winter's Sun
Haſtens ſo ſoon to *Thetis'* watry Bed;
Why the vaſt Seas ſucceſſive Ebb and Flow;
And all th' unfathom'd Wonders of the Heavens
With daring Curioſity explores.

AGAIN they wander thro' the MORAL World,
Show what is juſt, unjuſt, what right or wrong:

By what good Deeds Society is knit
In Union firm; beſt Link of Human-kind.

NOW with the Elegance of *GREECE* and *ROME*
Facetious they converſe; O ſacred Maid!
Here ſay, what endleſs Proſpects of Delight
Riſe to the Mind----Here *HOMER*, mighty Bard,
Father of Poeſy, thy nervous Lines
Swell with Invention, and with Muſick charm.

THEE, ſacred *VIRGIL!* ſecond in Applauſe
Preſuming I wou'd praiſe; with thy fam'd Song
Thoſe Hours that otherwiſe wou'd tedious creep,
Glide jocund, and delight the raviſh'd Soul;
By *Phœbus* ſent, judiciouſly you prune
Homer's luxuriant Flights; by thee improv'd
They bloom afreſh, and yield a nobler Fruit.

WHO can in Silence paſs gay *HORACE* by?
Politely elegant; whether he ſings

The

The Joys of ſparkling Wine, or youthful Love:
Or whether he with a peculiar Art
Betrays the Vicious; on his Fund of Wit
They feaſt delighted, while each pleaſing Line
Reclaims them unobſerv'd------

O *JUVENAL!* Reformer of thy Times,
And Scourge ſevere to a licentious Age,
What don't thy Pains deſerve? At thy Approach
Vice ſhrinks abaſh'd, and hangs her fainting Head.

WHAT need I ſay, that *TERENCE'* comick Muſe,
Juſt in Contrivance, beautifully dreſs'd
In all the Purity of *Roman* Stile,
Shall with his Praiſe and Name for ever live?

OF theſe enough: Deſiſt, fond Muſe, leſt thou
Unfortunately zealous to commend,
Shou'd grov'ling fall, and damp their riſing Fame.

IN theſe, while poſing *Fellows* are employ'd,
The awful *Provoſt* ſaunters o'er the Hall;
Attentive here and there he liſt'ning ſtands
And turns important Ears----Twice two long Hours,
Two Days ſucceſſive thus the *Youth* attend,
While many a ſilver'd Oracle of Time
Finds little Reſt; they in Revenge move ſlow,
And ſeemingly prolong the ſluggiſh Hours.

AT length to every *Scholar's* gladden'd Ear,
The Clock emits the long-expected Sound.
Clam'rous they riſe; while to their loud Acclaim,
The ecchoing Hall rebounds; thick thronging out
They ruſh tumultuous. Like a rapid Flood
That with unbridl'd Fury bears along
Th' obſtructing Mounds; and then with ſpreading Force
Pours a broad Deluge o're th' adjacent Plain:

So

So ruſh the *Scholars* forth; till by degrees,
In ſmall Cabals they diſcontinuous roam.

SOME, who neglectful of their Welfare, ſcorn'd
To be provided againſt Fate adverſe;
Sunk in Diſhonour, and with Cares oppreſs'd,
Like many a wicked Profligate in Life,
Haſte to the Refuge of the fumy Bowl.

OTHERS, who thro' the long and dang'rous Way,
With Judgment ſteer'd, join now with lightſome Hearts
To tell what Perils they have ſafely paſs'd.

AS when the *TROJANS*, who of Old were toſs'd
Thro' all the Dangers of the Seas and Land;
When they had made *HESPERIA*'s wiſh'd-for Shore
That ſeem'd ſo long to fly; gladſome recount
The various Horrors of the vaſt Abyſs.
Now *SCYLLA*'s and *CHARIBDIS*' wild Uproar

Is Muſick in their Ears; the *HARPIES* Form
Now charm their Eyes; the *CYCLOPS* monſt'rous Sons,
With all the Dangers they have ſafely paſs'd,
Pleaſe in Reflection, and redouble Mirth.

FINIS.